

# CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

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## BULLETIN

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### Request for Placement at Intake in a Child Guidance Agency\*

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AN important function of the Jewish Board of Guardians is child guidance. At the present time, we define this service as the study and treatment of children presenting problems of behavior which may express themselves in difficulties within themselves or in relation to their social environment. This implies that in many of our cases the focus of treatment will inevitably be the parent-child relationship.

#### *The Intake Process*

Intake in any social agency is naturally geared to the service which that agency is able to give. The nature and extent of the personal relationship established with the client, the kind and amount of information we seek to obtain, and the interpretations we make, all depend upon what we are prepared to do. Where our service is more concrete (placement, relief, etc.), it is relatively simpler to come to some agreement with the client at least about the direction in which we will proceed. The intake process is somewhat more complicated, however, where, as in child guidance, the nature of the service is less tangible. We are prepared to treat the child, and the parent in relation to the child's problem, but the concept of emotional growth inherent in the word "treatment" has little meaning to many clients. They seek a solution of the child's difficulties, accept the need for a personal relationship with the child so that he will be "influenced," but are rarely aware of their own influence on the problem or the need for help with this. The problem in intake is therefore often one of helping the parent come to some recognition of the part she will have to play in the continuing process. In many instances this will be achieved by helping her

face the fact that she is disturbed and wants relief, and that this implies that she too is an important part of any solution the agency will help to achieve. This is no insignificant achievement with a parent who is painfully confessing failure by asking for help, and who is even more painfully threatened by the idea that she may in some way be responsible for the difficulty. It is rather a tremendous step forward for her to be willing to continue to struggle with the problem in spite of its disturbing implications. To a considerable extent her decision will depend upon the skill with which the intake worker has been able to help her feel that she has really been understood. This feeling is inevitable if the discussion clarifies for her what she wants for herself, and just what the agency can do. She has the security of a more definite goal and of an agency which has promised to try to help her achieve that goal.

The growing awareness of the importance of clarity of agency function served to sharpen intake skills and more clearly define the boundaries of the intake interview. It was easier to progress with the client when we were definite about the kind of service we were equipped to give. However, there developed a tendency to view "function," or the kind of service given by the agency, as a more or less rigid entity determining acceptance or rejection of an application in intake on the basis of the client's articulated readiness to accept the service. No one can object to the essential reasonableness of this position, but neither is it possible to ignore the wide range of differences which clients possess of the psychological quality of "readiness." The main point of difference often appears to be the extent to which the case worker, particularly in intake, feels a responsibility to help the client to become more "ready" to accept the service. This paper does not pretend to provide any definitive answers to this much discussed question, but rather offers some experience which illustrates how one agency felt its way toward a tentative answer with a special group of cases.

\* This paper has grown out of a series of meetings of our intake committee, which consists of three intake workers, their assistants, the three district heads, who supervise the intake workers, and the Supervisor of Case Work. Questions of function, policy, process and mechanics are constantly being clarified, including that of the ambivalent request for placement at the point of intake.

*The Ambivalent Parent*

In the past, most requests for placement, ambivalent or complicated as they might have been, were referred to placement agencies. Intensive analysis of a group of these families revealed that there has been a tendency to refer whenever the parent articulated a desire for placement and this held true even where ambivalence was recognized. There was the assumption that if the focus was on placement, the handling of conflict and ambivalence around that request would more properly be within the scope of the placement agency. It was found that some parents never took further action, others terminated contact after a brief period, and still others returned or were referred back to us for intensive service. This experience led to a further clarification of our understanding of and responsibility with this type of request.

Every child guidance agency deals with some aspects of placement in many of its cases. Sometimes the question arises in intake, where it has presented difficult problems of philosophy, handling and inter-agency relationships.

In some of the cases where placement becomes a problem during the life of a guidance case, a more thorough intake study might have resulted in referral to the placement agency at the outset. In others the parent's desire for placement does not crystallize until after a period of treatment, and placement may be effected at that time. In still others the request for placement is encountered as the contact develops, but is an expression of the disturbed parent-child relationship rather than a real wish to separate from the child. In these placement does not occur. Questions often arise as to where the guidance responsibility ends and the placement responsibility begins. If a mother in intake at the guidance agency expresses a desire for placement, is it always the function of the placement agency to work out the emotional problems around this? Why did she not go to the placement agency in the first place? Is not this in itself an indication of her lack of readiness to go through with placement? That this was indeed the case was illustrated by what happened in a number of cases. Many had had previous contact with placement agencies, but placement was not effected and the problem continued with undiminished severity. In some cases there has been a previous placement. In all of them the focus of the parent is upon the difficult behavior of the child, or upon the problems of the parent in relation to this behavior. Placement was indecisively seen as a possible solution to the problem. It is with these "ambivalent" parents, who in intake discuss placement with a great deal of disturbance,

uncertainty, and doubt, that we feel the guidance agency has a special service to render.\*

In a technical psychiatric sense, "ambivalence" means having the opposing feelings of love and hate at the same time for one person. In a more general way, the term has come to mean having contradictory feelings (positive and negative) about things as well as people. In case work the term is now widely used to suggest such feelings about coming to an agency, taking relief, making plans, or arriving at any decision. Almost always ambivalence about placement is but a reflection of similar feelings toward the child, and the result is a state of tension in which it is not possible for the parent to resolve the conflict in either a positive or negative direction. As the tension grows, some parents, although beginning to seek relief, cannot go to the placement agency where the function implies definite action (resolution of conflict). It is this group of parents who will come to the guidance agency, where there is less need to make an immediate decision, and where they can ask for help in more general and less concrete ways.

The fact that the parent has come at all is, of course, an indication of a partial decision, but conflict, guilt and anxiety continue. It is important for the parent to feel that for the time being the status quo will remain unchanged. This is necessary in order not to increase the disturbance and conflict. It has, therefore, been found helpful to offer service in terms of an opportunity to explore with us the possibility of keeping the child at home, or at least to clarify what it is the parent really wants. Placement is discussed as a future possibility, to be considered if and when the parent may feel this is the solution. In this way both aspects of the ambivalence are taken into consideration, and some release of tension occurs because of the acceptance of her problem, and the willingness to help her arrive at an ultimate decision. From a child guidance point of view, we see this goal as within the function of "treatment of parent-child relationships," serving the interests not only of the client, but the purpose of inter-agency efficiency and economy of time.

\* Relatively uncomplicated requests for placement are referred directly to the placement agency, usually by the receptionist and occasionally by the intake worker. These include the more common cases where there has occurred the death or illness of parents resulting in serious neglect of the child, desertion, or other socially pathological situations. A second group includes those children who are clearly not eligible for foster home or private institutional placement because of feeble-mindedness, mental or physical illness, etc., and these can be steered directly to the proper resources in the community. There is, however, a large number of cases in which the parental request for placement stems essentially from disturbed parent-child relationships, which in turn result from destructive parental attitudes. In this group there are, of course, parents who clearly focus a request for placement and do not wish to consider other types of service.

The following case illustrates the experience in intake with a disturbed mother who, in two separate applications, focused on placement as the solution of her problem.

Mrs. L. was referred by the public agency, where she had gone to complain about Martin, age 9, whose difficult behavior she found increasingly intolerable. In the interview she was tense, disturbed and overwhelmed. She understood our function, but wanted Martin sent to camp for the summer. It was bad enough to handle him while school was open; she said she would have a nervous breakdown if she had to cope with him during the summer. (The father was in a state hospital.)

It was with difficulty that Mrs. L. was able to elaborate upon the nature of the boy's behavior. From her description, Martin appeared to be violently aggressive toward her, and was a serious problem in the school and neighborhood. Marked rejection with accompanying guilt were evident. Attempts to explain how she might be helped were quickly rejected, Mrs. L. reiterating her need for a separation.

It was explained why Martin could not be sent to our camp, and worker introduced the possibility of a longer placement through another agency. Mrs. L. grasped at this eagerly, at the same time bursting into tears, insisting that this wasn't what she really wanted, but that the situation made it necessary.

We subsequently learned that Mrs. L. had kept her appointment at the placement agency. There she excitedly demanded that the boy be removed from the home immediately, was unable to discuss the situation in an organized fashion, resented the "red tape," and angrily stamped out when she learned that no immediate placement was possible. She was not heard from until eight months later, when she returned to us asking for help with Martin.

In this interview Mrs. L. was again very upset, wept bitterly, exhibited extreme guilt and was overwhelmed by the boy's behavior. She seemed desperate but unable to face the situation with any degree of objectivity. She insisted that something had to be done immediately, that Martin must be sent away for at least a year. When asked about her previous experience with the placement agency, she vaguely explained that she probably had not made herself clear. She had been told that immediate placement was not possible but in any case she had wanted camp for Martin. She had finally arranged this, and camp worked wonders for him. For some time he had been a changed boy, but now things were as bad as ever. She pleaded that something be done to help her, and was told that perhaps we could work something out together. She felt reassured and became calmer.

Worker asked why Mrs. L. thought Martin was such a difficult problem. This released a flood of tears, and with help Mrs. L. was able to bring out that Martin was "just like his father." Perhaps he was a mental case too. He had been a problem from birth. There followed a lengthy description of the unhappiness and trouble which had begun when Mrs. L. became pregnant. She had never wanted the child. The material clearly indicated her basic rejection of the boy and her identification of him with Mr. L., who was also rejected. The boy had been exposed to constant destructive discord between the parents, and had been "poisoned" against her by Mr. L. At the same time, conflict and guilt pervaded all of Mrs. L.'s verbalizations. Maybe it was all her fault. Perhaps she is the one who is poison for the child. She knows she is disturbed and needs a rest. If Martin goes away, they will both have a rest from each other. This was accompanied by a wringing of the hands, doubts and uncertainty, fears about what placement might do to the boy, and her own inability to make a decision.

As Mrs. L. increasingly became aware of the worker's identification with and acceptance of her own difficulties, she

was gradually able to crystallize this inability to decide and act. The discussion focused more upon what was happening to her, her need for help with her own confused feelings, and she finally responded as though grasping at a last straw. Placement was included as a definite possibility should Mrs. L. ultimately decide this was what she wanted. There was a complete acceptance of Mrs. L.'s desire for placement as there was of emotional problems in the way of further action.

It was around the discussion of our service, and how we might be able to help her, that new significant reactions emerged. For the first time Mrs. L. was facing her own role in the situation, and the fact that something about her feelings made it difficult for her to obtain the service she wanted. She became thoughtful, almost preoccupied, as it became clearer to her what coming here would mean. She asked questions about the psychiatrists, workers, appointments, and how long the contact would be. She understood that we would try to help her clarify what it was that stood in her way, and that after a trial period of two or three months we might both be able to decide whether she wanted to continue here or make other plans. However, a marked reluctance now appeared in her manner. She seemed to need reassurance that we would recommend placement if we felt this was necessary. Worker said it sometimes was necessary, and that we would give Mrs. L. our professional judgment about this after the trial period. She was relieved, and left the office in a calm, thoughtful mood.

The case was assigned, and on the day that Mrs. L. had her first appointment after intake, the placement agency telephoned to say that Mrs. L. had applied there. She had insisted that she definitely wanted placement. The application was therefore accepted. We subsequently learned that Martin had been placed.

In the original interview with Mrs. L., she appeared to be focusing on placement, but was unable to proceed beyond an abortive first interview. Eight months later, a recognition and handling of her ambivalence in one interview produced different results. A process had begun in which Mrs. L. became more or less aware of how involved she was, that there was something about her own feelings which interfered with her functioning. Around the discussion of her ambivalence and blocking, and the choice of two courses of action, emerged a new ability to consider alternatives. This new psychological constellation implied an objectivity toward the problem not heretofore present. Mrs. L. was able to consider further what coming to the guidance agency would mean; she was again faced with a decision, this time involving a type of responsibility on her part that she could not exercise before. In the ensuing struggle around alternatives she decided to place, but this time on a more mature level. This was made possible through the worker's acceptance of her as someone who was not ready to make a decision when she came to the agency. She was secure in the knowledge that any decision she eventually made would be her own, and she was further reassured by our willingness to help her arrive at that decision. This resulted in her ability to face her intentions in a more objective and realistic way. She came to the placement agency



a disturbed mother, but with a view of herself and the problem which made further progress possible.

The extent to which similar situations are handled in intake depends upon the individual case. While in some instances, as with Mrs. L., the desire for placement can be crystallized in one or more intake interviews, and the parent referred to the placement agency, we have found that most cases require assignment, and contact for a more extended period. The following is an example of this group:

Jack, age 11, was referred by his mother at the suggestion of an attendance officer because he was unmanageable and violently aggressive toward Mrs. T. Before the first interview we learned from the placement agency that Jack had been committed to the institution as a neglected child two years before by the Children's Court, and had been discharged to his mother after a year. The parents were separated and there had been a long history of serious marital discord, separations, change of home, and general disorganization. For years Jack had been exhibiting behavior disorders.

We learned that a few days before coming to us, Mrs. T. had been sent to the placement agency by a court worker. Mrs. T., however, had insisted that she did not want placement, but help with the child in the home.

In the first interview, Mrs. T. was very tense, disturbed and defensive. She definitely rejected Jack, identified him in a hostile way with his father, and resentfully elaborated upon the boy's difficult behavior. She felt she could no longer tolerate the situation, and desperately said "he is killing me."

Mrs. T. was helped to express her own feelings of frustration, dependence and need for love. Acceptance of her problems made it possible for her to express her conflicting feelings about Jack. She wanted to love him but he didn't let her. Guilt and remorse characterized her feeling. She didn't want to do it. On the one hand, she feels she must send him away, but on the other, it breaks her heart because it will so upset Jack. She didn't want to place him before, but couldn't help it. She reiterated her uncertainty about placement, her inability to decide, but felt that something had to be done.

As our function was explained, Mrs. T. continued ambivalent. When, however, she was offered an opportunity to clarify her feelings in relation to the boy and around possible plans, she eagerly accepted this. She understood this was something we would try out together, that a definite decision was not immediately necessary, and that we would study Jack and the total problem of her relationship to him. In this way she might later decide what she wanted to do.

The material available to us in intake indicated that placement would ultimately be necessary because of the severity of the problems in both the boy and his mother and this opinion was strengthened after psychiatric examination and consultation. However, Mrs. T. was unable to move in the direction of placement, and was willing at least to examine further the nature of the difficulty between her and Jack.

The case was, therefore, opened with the definite goal of helping Mrs. T. decide what kind of help she really wanted with Jack. It was carried intensively for three months. Treatment was focused on Mrs. T.'s own problems, but discussion was limited to the connection between these problems and Jack, her conflict and uncertainty about what she ought to do, and her inability to take definite steps. At the end of that time, Mrs. T. had decided that it was impossible for her to keep the child, and she had achieved sufficient release and awareness of her own patterns to take the action she wanted with a lesser degree of conflict. She went to the placement agency on her

own initiative and from them we learned that she was able to carry through the plan in a more consistent, responsible and organized fashion. Placement was effected a month later.

We saw our role with the boy as giving him an opportunity to express his feelings of unhappiness and deprivation, his fears about placement, and by means of a supportive approach to make it possible for him to participate in the future placement proceedings with some degree of stability. While preparation for placement as such is the responsibility of the placement agency, our own focus with Jack was rather on his disturbed relationship with his mother and helping him face her intentions in a more mature way.

In this case the guidance function was consciously used from the outset. It was recognized in intake that coming to the agency indicated a decision to do something about an intolerable impasse, but that coming to a *guidance* agency had special significance for Mrs. T. The nature of her ambivalence made a placement agency too threatening, whereas our service represented that aspect of her conflicting feelings which urged her to keep Jack at home. Help with the parent-child relationship was charged with less danger for her, although it was not her real wish. It was when Mrs. T. was permitted to use our service in this way and to proceed on the basis of considering alternatives, that she was finally able to resolve her ambivalence in the different direction of placement. From the point of view of the agency, there was implied a flexible concept of function, and its use in a dynamic way related to the needs of the client.

In the above discussion I have attempted to describe how the intake department of a child guidance agency can help parents who come with an ambivalent request for placement. There are, of course, many degrees and types of ambivalence. Its presence when placement is discussed in intake does not immediately suggest that the case must be accepted by the agency. It is rather where the degree and nature of ambivalence seem likely to prevent further steps toward placement that the guidance agency appears to have a responsibility. A too narrow conception of our responsibility might have again resulted in referral of Mrs. T. for placement. This conception would have seen the problem only in terms of the service requested, with the probable result that no service at all would have been sought or obtained. A broader definition of our service, sensitive to the conflicting dynamics underlying the request, and a willingness to use our skills to help resolve the conflict, in the long run made for greater service to the client and increased the contribution of the case work community in general.

## The Place of a Dynamic Board in a Child Care Agency

I. EVELYN SMITH

Executive Secretary, Children's Aid Society of Wisconsin

THERE is no entry on the credit side of the Children's Aid Society balance sheet called "Board of Directors." This is a serious error in any listing of our assets because the progress the agency has made during recent years is due in no small measure to this group of thirty-six busy men and women whose devotion to helping children is tempered with sound business judgment.

Article IV of the Children's Aid Society constitution says, "The business of the corporation shall be under the care and management of a board of directors." The board gives this a very literal interpretation. The board works. It outlines a hard program and then carries it through. The members come to meetings without a non-attendance penalty.

When it became apparent that raising the money by direct solicitation was costing a disproportionately large amount, the board made a careful survey and outlined a new system which called for radical reorganization. It was determined that responsibility for community relationships should be placed on the case workers.

Board members explained to the staff the necessity for making the change and appealed to them to accept their new responsibilities. The plan did not involve actual solicitation of contributions by the workers, but depended on strong local boards and committees for success. The workers undertook to revitalize local leadership in their districts—to enlist groups whose knowledge of the agency and interest in children's work would result in their interpreting the Society to their neighbors and accepting responsibility for securing support.

Under the board's dynamic leadership the workers accepted their new assignment with enthusiasm, in the spirit of "togetherness."

The plan has been highly successful from all angles. By closer contact between workers and community leaders there has come a greater understanding of children's work, the workers have frankly admitted that they enjoy the work, and for the first time in many years the agency operated with a balanced budget.

It took courage to break away from the old order. A lethargic board might have closed its eyes to the necessity for a change.

### *Understanding of the Program*

Board members are continually reading to keep informed about child welfare work and avail them-

selves of every opportunity to learn more about the job they have undertaken. The board functions largely through committees which meet on call. Committee assignments are made after careful consideration of special interests and capabilities. These small groups study a particular part of the program and make recommendations to the board at its monthly meetings.

*The Case Committee* is the best informed group on the actual procedures involved in case work. They meet monthly with the workers to discuss objectively cases which involve questionable decisions. They help the worker maintain her perspective, stimulate and clarify her thinking, play a supportive role in difficult decisions, help her understand when the time and money required for a plan may be excessive from the standpoint of the agency's resources, and keep her constantly aware of the community point of view. The Case Committee has an understanding of specific agency problems and they are helpful in passing on this information to other board members in general meetings and interpreting to the public the value of the agency's services.

*A special Intake Committee* functioned regularly for several months, meeting once a week for two hours to go over all applications for the preceding week. This service was requested when it seemed necessary to curtail the intake considerably and it was felt that the board should understand the reasons back of this necessity and should help in formulating the new intake policies. Two board members also took an active part in meetings with another agency group to work out a satisfactory joint intake policy.

They have been hard-working members of committees planning general community undertakings. In this way they have had broad community contacts and have kept in touch with new trends and needs of the community as a whole instead of confining themselves to one agency.

*The House and Clothing Committee* has thoroughly acquainted itself with the children's clothing needs and the upkeep of the building housing the office. They take an active part in these tasks.

*The Financial Committee* is concerned with long-time plans. They evaluate present operations to see that there is no dangerous trend away from these objectives, at the same time suggesting policies to con-

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## BULLETIN

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Henrietta L. Gordon, *Editor*

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## Is More Day Care Needed?

THE time has come for each community to discover whether more day care is now needed or may be needed as mothers increasingly are employed. There were various references to day care at the National Conference of Social Work in New Orleans, but the contributions boiled down to agreement upon: (1) the need for study by local and possibly state committees to permit estimates of those needing service; (2) the need for a day care program which includes foster family day care and visiting homemaker service, as well as group care in day nurseries and especially in neighborhood centers, such as schools and churches, serving older children; and (3) the need for budgeting financial support, with recognition of the mother's own ability and obligation to pay and of the community to carry its share of the cost. But with all this said, we of the Child Welfare League are asked repeatedly whether there is a basic need for this type of child care, or whether its promotion reflects another bit of war excitement.

It would be fortunate indeed if the children of America's employed mothers could write their own answer to our question. An attempt to answer it from the office of the League keeps bringing us back to the child whose mother cannot hear his voice when he comes home from school, because she hears only the hum of her machine and because she is in a factory several miles from home.

It is obvious to the staff of the Child Welfare League that more day care and a more balanced program of such care are needed, and that we must recognize this old need which has been increased by wartime pressures. Long before this war began children fared well or poorly when their mothers were at work. If the mother scrubbed office buildings the child ran the streets; if she was a teacher, nurse or stenographer, the child probably received day care. No one knows how many children have had

some type of day care without safeguards supplied by health or welfare workers.

It is fortunate that at conferences held recently social workers have vigorously questioned the wisdom of mothers leaving their children in the hands of others, when this might be avoided by proper administration of Aid to Dependent Children, payment of adequate wages to fathers, or suitable allotments to families from which the father has entered military service. Nightmares should startle those who have grown feeble in administering Aid to Dependent Children. Indignation is a proper reaction wherever we find county officials shoving women off A.D.C. lists because they can obtain wartime jobs. The Social Security Act named children and not county treasuries as beneficiaries of this type of service.

Whether wealthy or poor, each mother needs to weigh carefully such contradictory demands as, "Should I stay home and mother my child?", "Should I work, so that I can give him better care?", "Should I work because I am skilled, and it is more patriotic to arrange for day care than to deprive the country of my services?", "Being inadequate as a mother should I turn the child's care over to someone else and work at a task at which I am competent?"

Mothers need help in answering these questions and they need an organized service for consultation, supervision of the children and anticipation of emergencies, such as illness of their children. Many a woman will underestimate her own value as a mother and will be unaware of the inadequacies of most substitute mothers.

Study of the local need for day care is the first step and procedure for such study is clearly outlined in, "Factors in Planning Community Day-Care Programs," by Emma O. Lundberg, Director of Special Projects, U. S. Children's Bureau. This is the most recent of three contributions released by the Children's Bureau, all of which will help in community planning.

Day nurseries have an important place but they cannot take the place of foster family day care, homemaker service, or of neighborhood services for children beyond day nursery ages. Nine member agencies of the Child Welfare League now report foster family day care for a few children. There are persistent reports that children over ten years of age present a problem for which planning is most needed.

The cost of care is as great a reality as the need for day care. In wartime we are talking about em-



ployed mothers. They should pay a substantial part of the cost and those who organize day care should avoid any collusion with employers who may pay wages too low to allow mothers to carry their proper share of costs. But our community chests, war chests and governmental appropriations also are needed to cover costs of administration, case work, health services and some of the cost of care. Governmental support can be obtained only by organization of a project under special regulations certified by the welfare and education departments of the state.

—HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

### Foster Mothers' Clubs

The Foster Home Department of the Children's Service Bureau of Pittsburgh reports on the activity of its Foster Mothers' Club. Its primary purpose was to afford an opportunity to this group to understand better the purpose of foster care. Interesting discussions on problems of adolescents, the importance of recreation, etc., were scheduled for each meeting. Under the leadership of the foster mothers themselves goals for the club which should be of interest to foster parents' clubs all over the country were formulated as follows:

1. To gain a better understanding of children and the various problems they present.
2. To foster a spirit of cooperation by bringing foster parents and staff members into closer relationship.
3. To deepen the understanding of the women who are caring for foster children in their homes through educational counseling and the social life of a group.
4. To stimulate an interest on the part of foster parents in recommending and recruiting prospective foster homes.

They participated actively through the Clubs' Planning Committee in editing the Foster Mothers' Manual. Immeasurable value as far as the basic problem of child placement is concerned accrued from their discussions, which resulted in suggested changes and ultimately in their approving such matters as allowances and clothing. Questions of agency supervision and the meaning of shared responsibility for the foster child received their attention. At a time of so much concern about the shortage of foster homes, the Foster Mothers' Clubs may be helpful, because of their fine relationship with the agency in encouraging friends and neighbors to offer their homes in the service of foster family placement.

To quote a member of the staff:

"The foster mothers have gained a better understanding of their relationship to the Bureau and their function as foster mothers. They feel that they play a vital part in the work of the agency, and many of them have become more cooperative in their use of case work and supervision. The Club is a real demonstration of democracy at work."

### The Americas and Their Children

ATTENDANCE at the Eighth Pan American Child Congress held definite values for those attending from the United States, and our courteous guests gave repeated assurance of their appreciation. The delegations were larger than most of us expected, and it is significant that in spite of wartime restrictions on transportation from these countries that so many flew from such distances. It gives assurance that in all of the Americas the interest in child welfare has been intensified by the war, and that this interest is shared by those in diplomatic circles and the officials who control precious space in airplanes. It means that with the pooling of our powerful Pan American resources for war production we have retained the sanity which accounts also for the needs of children.

Our provincialism was reflected in the dead pan expressions of thirty or forty of the social workers, educators and pediatricians from the United States who were without an understanding of Spanish. This picture of our tongue-tied professionals was happily relieved by a few of our own delegates, and notably by Miss Katharine Lenroot, chosen by the Congress as its Chairman, who spoke as frequently in Spanish as in English. Her official responsibilities required and permitted her to interpret to those who spoke Spanish and those who knew only English. There were official interpreters to assist and account for such contributions as were made in Portuguese and French.

Physicians, mostly men, constituted the bulk of the official delegations. There were women delegates, however, including the Chairman of the Mexican delegation, Dr. Mathilde Rodriguez Cabo, Director General of Child Aid, Department of Public Assistance of Mexico. Among the individual members of the Congress were representatives from American countries now enrolled in United States graduate schools.

The entire program was tinged with references to wartime influences, and some of the papers dealt specifically with problems created or intensified by the war. Social security was given prominence in discussions. Maternal and infant welfare and nutri-

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## THE BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS—

### THE CASE WORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Case Work Committee, which many social agencies working today in the family and children's field have set up, has many advantages. First of all, it introduces the layman gradually to the problems that confront the trained social worker in his endeavor to make a long-time plan for his client, and thus to help solve or modify the dilemma. These men and women who become members of the advisory case work committee become more and more aware of the nature of case work technique and recognize its importance. Again, they become acquainted with the social service resources of their community, which almost every family problem involves, and of which even the average agency board member knows very little. The case work advisory committee members become personally acquainted with the members of the staff of the agency, recognize the importance of their professional training, experience and judgment, see more clearly what the workers strive to accomplish. In a word, the advisory case work committeeman, equipped with this data, is sympathetic and understanding. If critical of the work of the agency, as he ought loyally to be, his very criticisms are offered in a friendly, rather than in a hostile and denunciatory, spirit. The case work advisory committee is the ideal place for the social education of the mature interested layman.

Secondly, the advisory committee members are in a position constantly to bring to the professional case workers the non-technical viewpoints of the laity, and to check any tendency toward over-specialization, or extreme theoretic "professionalism," to which many professional groups are in danger of succumbing. The intelligent layman, even though he does not pose as an amateur social worker, is still in a position, by virtue of his own personal observations and experience, to broaden the whole field of social diagnosis and treatment by the unexpected light which his informal suggestions frequently supply to the case worker in the solution of the case under consideration. The well-chosen advisory committee, made up, as it usually is, of physicians, lawyers, clergymen and teachers, business men and women from many trades, key men from industry and labor, housewives and municipal officials, offers a wide diversity of practical wisdom, a many-sided approach to the fine art of living, which cannot but enrich the mind and strengthen the hands of the professional case worker.

Finally, the case work advisory committee has an

opportunity to bring light to an almost forgotten and neglected area of social work, namely, the continuous education of the general rank and file of the community. It is obvious that private social work, which acts as an advance laboratory for the public service fields, cannot succeed, even in the work of finding adequate financial support, unless it tells its story effectively to an ever-widening number of citizens. This careful appeal to the public has been largely neglected and undeveloped. The failure of the man and woman in the street to respond is largely due to lack of understanding of the nature and value of the social work that is required in the average city today. The members of the advisory committee could and should be encouraged to act as missionaries to the community, as convinced ambassadors, fully sold on the value of scientific social work, through the invaluable insights which every one of them has acquired through his membership on an advisory case work committee, and his participation in the difficult and serious human problems which come continuously before it.

—RABBI CHARLES B. LATZ

*Board of Trustees and Advisory Committee, Family Service Society and Children's Bureau, Canton, Ohio*

N. B.—Today, the ever-growing demands on our time make each of us eager that this time and effort yield the best possible returns in usefulness. Board members want to make certain that committees on which they serve will continue to be instruments for bettering the services of the agency. Board members are invited to use this page as a forum for discussion of their responsibilities. Suggestions for modification in its present use will be welcome.—Ed.

### The Americas and Their Children

(Continued from page 7)

tion received more discriminating and scientific attention than any other subjects.

The discussion on infant feeding was kept firmly on the ground by a delegate who told of the impracticality of bottle feedings, in certain regions, at certain ages, due to the scarcity of milk. On just such questions the United States delegation made valuable contributions, one of the best being a paper by Mordecai Ezekiel, Economic Adviser to the Secretary of Agriculture, on "Measures to Encourage an Adequate Food Supply."

It is indeed fortunate for the children of the American republics that this Congress was held. Wartime and post-war planning will be stimulated. Miss Lenroot and the staff of the Children's Bureau have represented us well in this Congress, and we may turn to the Bureau for detailed reports and findings.

—HOWARD W. HOPKIRK



## On Unmarried Parents

A STUDY\* of 164 unmarried parents, sponsored by the Unmarried Parenthood Committee of the Children's Division of the Council of Social Agencies of Providence, Rhode Island, reveals in the conclusion and summary some local findings and some questions that should be of general interest. Isabel V. D. Traver, of the Rhode Island Children's Friend Society, who made this study advises rightly that—"No attempt should be made to draw from a study of this size conclusions which are generic to the problems of unmarried parenthood." The local findings here summarized serve "to indicate general trends that may be found in Rhode Island at the present time and to consider them in a diagnostic light."

### *The Unmarried Mother*

"It is reasonable to anticipate that an unmarried mother in Rhode Island will be a native-born white American, residing in the Urban County of Providence, where she was likewise born. Although she may be in her thirties or perhaps under sixteen years of age, it is likely that she will be either seventeen or eighteen years old or else twenty-two or twenty-three years old. If the former age, she probably had no intention of marrying the man with whom she had sex relations, whereas if she is older there will be a slightly greater chance that she hoped for marriage. It is doubtful if the man with whom she has sex relations is a casual acquaintance, as it is far more likely that she will have known him for more than two years. There is reason to expect that she will be a single woman who has had a ninth grade education and who left school when she was sixteen years old. If she is employed she will probably be a domestic, although she might be a mill or factory worker. It is almost certain that she will come from the lower economic level, earning \$9 weekly or less if a domestic and seldom, if ever, attaining \$20 a week if employed otherwise. This unmarried mother will most likely be confined in a hospital unless she is under twenty years of age, at which time it is possible that she will go to a maternity home. It is improbable that she will be confined at home unless she is considerably older and has had either a legitimate child, an illegitimate child or both prior to her present confinement. After her baby is born there is a good likelihood that this unmarried mother will return to her own family with her child. If she does not do this, the child will prob-

ably be committed to the care of the State or else be placed in a boarding home, perhaps under the auspices of a child placing agency.

### *The Unmarried Father*

"Similarly, the unmarried father in Rhode Island is likely to be a native born, white American who is living in the metropolitan Providence County in which he was also born. Unlike the unmarried mother, however, there is a greater chance that he was born in another state and that he now resides outside of Rhode Island. In all likelihood, the unmarried father will be eight or nine years older than the unmarried mother and it is even conceivable that he will be fifty or sixty years old. It is hardly probable, however, that he will be younger than the woman. The chances are great that he, too, will be unmarried but there is some reason to believe that he may be living with his wife at the time that he is having extra-marital relationships. If he did not leave school at the completion of the eighth grade at sixteen years, it is probable that he had a better education than the unmarried mother and that perhaps he has completed high school. It is quite conceivable that this man will be employed, either as a semi-skilled laborer or a skilled one, but that it is impossible to gauge the salary that he may be earning. It is very improbable that this alleged father will assume much responsibility for the child who is born out of wedlock. If he does so, perhaps it will be the result of efforts made by the local Department of Public Welfare or even because of court action. If it does happen that he is assuming financial responsibility it will probably be through weekly payments, which will never exceed \$4.00. On the other hand, if he has discharged his legal responsibility by making a lump sum settlement it is likely to have amounted to about \$200 or \$250. There is a small chance that this unmarried father will live in a common-law union with the mother and child pending a divorce so that he may marry her; and there is an even smaller chance that he will marry her immediately after the birth of the child.

Perhaps a few questions concerning unmarried parenthood in Rhode Island could be studied in detail in order that more constructive case work may be accomplished in the future.

### *Unmarried Mother Younger than Unmarried Father*

"It is significant that the unmarried mother is almost without exception younger than the alleged father and that the average age differential is eight

\*Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of the two-year course of the New York School of Social Work, June, 1941.

or nine years, although extending up to forty or more years. What are the satisfactions derived by a young girl from the companionship of an older man? Does she identify him with the father whom she cannot overtly, and probably not even consciously, love because of the social mores? Is she searching for a security and an affection which she was denied in her earlier life? Is association with an older and presumably more economically secure man merely a means of gaining material satisfactions and a 'good time'? Is it perhaps a symbol to the world that maturity has been reached and dependence and childhood are definitely past? Perhaps the younger woman is sought by the older man because of some inherent satisfaction which he gains because of her youth.

*Largest Group Adolescent or Emerging from Adolescence*

"Another factor of significance in the present study was the tendency for more children to be born out of wedlock to mothers between the ages of seventeen and eighteen and between twenty-two and twenty-three years than in any other age group. Are these girls, many of whom have recently left school, asserting their independence in the most extreme manner of which they know, or are they seeking excitement and adventure in every possible way? Has their home life been too sheltered and are they only now having an opportunity to associate with the opposite sex? How adequate has their sex instruction been? Fewer of the older age group than those in the younger age group stated that they never had intended to marry. Were the former perhaps seeking marriage and the security of their own homes? Had they tired of independence, freedom and the inevitable struggle for a livelihood? Since the average length of time that the unmarried parents had known each other was over two years, the number of pregnancies would at this age indicate a waning interest, perhaps, on the part of the first serious 'boy friend.'

*Large Proportion are Domestic*

"The fact that so many domestics in proportion to the other occupations become unmarried mothers is of importance to consider. Are there factors, such as solitude, social discrimination and inadequate pay, inherent in domestic work which cause a certain type of individual to seek release in extra-marital relationships? If so, what exactly are these factors and how may they be counteracted? What type of individual finds it most difficult to overcome them? Is the social worker failing when she so often helps to

place the adolescent girl and later the unmarried mother in wage homes and domestic positions?

*Responsibility to Wives and Children of Alleged Fathers*

"Extreme concern should be given to the fact that twenty-three of the alleged fathers were living with their wives and legitimate children at the time that the illegitimate pregnancy occurred. Was there a marital disharmony existing between the man and his wife that a social worker might have helped them work through? How much consideration is given the legal wife by the social worker who is primarily concerned in the unmarried mother and her child?

*How Can the Unmarried Father Use the Case Work Service*

"From this study it would seem that little effort is made by the social agencies to help the unmarried father work through his own problems to a better adjustment. Quantitatively there was relatively little known factual material about the alleged father when compared with the information known about the unmarried mother. Does the unmarried father feel the need for case work services and would he use them if they were offered to him? How often could help be given without violating the confidence and lessening the value of the services offered to the unmarried mothers? Would a man social worker be more easily accepted by the unmarried father than a woman worker is? How often would the alleged father wish to participate in the plans that are being made for his offspring if he were given the opportunity? What are his emotional reactions to the child and to the unmarried mother? Is the fact that he has shown relatively little responsibility in the past due in part to the attitude of the social worker who so often seeks him out only to gain financial support for the child and to establish paternity? Society is either protective in its attitude toward the alleged father, indifferent over the situation or punitive toward him. What would be the effect of offering the unmarried father genuine understanding coupled with a professional readiness to serve if he wishes case work help?"

As yet little has been written and much less done by way of helping the unmarried father. Interest in case work with the unmarried father has been developing. The BULLETIN invites you to submit material on this subject.

The full study, entitled, "One Hundred Sixty-four Unmarried Parents" is available for circulation to members and affiliates.

## The Place of a Dynamic Board in a Child Care Agency

(Continued from page 5)

form to current financial and business conditions. For instance, in the present period of inflation the long-time financial policy calls for accumulating reserves. The Financial Committee has a sub-committee which made a study of the agency's policies regarding the collection of reimbursements and subsequently made recommendations in regard to these.

### Interpretation

One of the well-established functions of a board is to interpret the agency to the community and interpret the public to the staff. The board recognizes the necessity of having the public conscious of the great need and usefulness of the services of the agency. Therefore, a definite item in the budget is allocated for this purpose.

The Interpretation and Support Committee considers ways and means of educating the public to a better understanding of child welfare work, of interpreting the work of the agency, and of approaching organizations and individuals for support of the work. They are responsible for working out new ways of increasing the support of the work. There is a sub-committee whose work is to obtain a really interested constituency of members. All new members are enrolled through personal interviews, at which time the committee members explain the work of the agency in some detail.

The board members have made talks to groups and all of them have made a point of interpreting the agency to individuals.

### Progressive Planning

The board has taken an increasing interest in the professional growth of the staff. They have an understanding of the special skills and techniques required and realize that the standards and success of the agency are dependent upon the training and skill of the workers. The staff has been given the opportunity to attend conferences, special seminars and institutes and the board has been sufficiently concerned about such opportunities for development that they have made provision in the budget to assist in such expenses. The board members have permitted leaves of absence for further study and have established a scholarship plan for workers unable to finance all their expenses. They have helped the younger, less experienced workers by giving them opportunities to present cases and other material. They

have also recognized the workers' need to participate in community problems as well as agency activities if they are to accept greater responsibilities.

Meetings between the staff and board have augmented understanding and mutual confidence. Social gatherings have made us all better acquainted and business meetings have given the staff an opportunity to hear some of the board's thinking.

The Policy and Personnel Committee deals with matters relating to case work and personnel policies of the agency. Their most recent activity has been working out a definite salary scale which would give the workers greater security and also provide a higher maximum salary than at present. They visited executives of other agencies in their study of the practices followed in similar agencies.

The Nominating Committee has made a real effort to select new board members on the basis of qualifications for the task, interest in the program and willingness to assume an active part in the work.

The Medical Committee, under the leadership of a physician on the board, has worked out a program providing private medical, dental, psychiatric and psychological care for a large number of our children. The Committee is now working on a plan to give such care to all the children and to add services other than those now available.

To become such an integrated part of the total organization it has been necessary for the board to understand the goals toward which the agency is working and the broad philosophy behind its program. They have been able to do this to an unusual degree.

With all this interest and close cooperation in the agency program they have nevertheless recognized the necessity for delegating authority to the executive and have left her free to interpret the agency's program to the community and to express her own opinions. They have not tried to control the staff, nor expected to participate in professional areas, but have been ready to make big contributions in other ways. Their satisfaction has come from the knowledge that because of their sympathetic understanding and willingness to participate wherever needed the whole organization has functioned more smoothly. The energies of each individual worker in the agency have been released to give better service to children. Because of this the agency has become a flexible, developing organization capable of adjusting itself to changing times and new conditions. Such a group of board members becomes a vital and integrating force, not only in their own agency, but in their influence on the whole community.



## BOOK NOTES

FOUNDATIONS FOR A SCIENCE OF PERSONALITY. By Andras Angyal. Commonwealth Fund, N. Y., 1941.

There is no doubt but that a scientific grasp of personality growth and pattern is a necessary clinical aid. The variables which the clinical psychiatrist and social worker must work with account for the wide variation in opinion and treatment methodology among various workers. Dr. Angyal is attempting to narrow the gap between the opinions of individual workers who might be directing their study on one common patient.

Although the language is at first overwhelming and frightening to the less scholarly reviewer, it soon becomes a new possession easily handled and almost temptingly applicable to daily clinical procedure. One may feel an over-determined modesty in avoiding the use of the Holistic terminology introduced by Dr. Angyal, but it might well become the common language, eventually.

Psychiatrists and allied workers who have learned to understand and make use of psychosomatic and psychobiologic medicine will find a new complementary tool in this truly scientific approach to the idea that the whole personality operates in every partial response, both within and outside the organism itself.

Practitioners in social work are apt to be bewildered by the new vocabulary which Dr. Angyal brings to his interesting subject. Workers who have become comfortably oriented in the language of Gestalt psychology will find it a little easier to follow. The advantage which will come to the reader will be along philosophical lines, of course. Clinical value will be derived from the philosophical advances which are sure to be made. Therefore, it will be necessarily of indirect value to the field worker.

—DR. O. B. MARKEY  
Cleveland, Ohio

### Available on Loan to Members, Affiliates and Associates

THE EFFECT OF WAR AND CIVIL DEFENSE ON CHILDREN: THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE, Dr. Martha M. Eliot, *The Social Service Review*, March, 1942.

PROGRESS IN ADOPTION LEGISLATION, Mary Ruth Colby, *The Social Service Review*, March, 1942.

REACTIONS OF CHILDREN TO BLACK-OUTS, Joseph C. Solomon, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, April, 1942.

This is a report of the behavior of groups of children in an orphanage and a home for delinquent girls during recent blackouts in San Francisco.

VOLUNTEERS IN CHILD CARE, OFFICE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE AND UNITED STATES CHILDREN'S BUREAU, March, 1942.

WARTIME PROBLEMS OF FAMILY SECURITY, Helen R. Jeter, *The Family*, May, 1942.

CASE WORK IN A DAY NURSERY, Alice L. Voiland, *The Family*, May, 1942.

## READERS' FORUM

DEAR EDITOR:

I am writing to know if the League has done any thinking in regard to the question of mutual boarding homes for working mothers. Is "mutual" the correct word? We are seeing in the paper an increased number of ads for homes for working mothers and their small children, and in many instances the age of the child is given somewhere between three and six years. What is the responsibility of the children's agencies in a community to help these mothers find adequate homes? I am convinced that if we offered these services we could be pretty much overwhelmed. On the other hand, I think it is very likely that these mothers may accept very inadequate homes in order to find a place to live with their children. This mutual boarding home, and I call it that for the want of a better name, will have to be used in instances where the mother may be working partly at night. While I hope we can have employers who can arrange to have mothers with small children work only day-time shifts, I think that will be hard to control and I think many of these mothers will take work on a night shift every three or four weeks as the time demands rather than give up the possibility of taking the job. It needs to be thought of along with the program of foster day care and nursery school care.

If an agency should offer this service, what should be the policy in regard to medical examinations for both the mother and the child before they go into the home, and the requirements for the examination of the foster family where the mother and the child live? Is the agency responsible for seeing that continued medical care is carried through even if the mother does not take the initiative herself? Should there be the same standards as we use in our foster homes today? How about the payment of board? Should the mother pay the board directly to the family or should the board be paid through the office as we do in foster day care?

Have there been any policies and procedures set up for this kind of care? You see, I am concerned about this whole problem, both in relation to children's agencies' responsibility for the program and the standards that should be set up if we assume responsibility for some of this care.

DEAR EDITOR:

There has been a feeling among several of the local agencies for some time that we needed to give serious consideration to the possible development of some foster homes where parents and children could be boarded together. Our Supervisor of Child Placing has been concerned about children who have been separated from parents because of the lack of suitable resources in the community for placement of the parent and child together. Some placements of this nature have been made but they have failed because the agency did not have sufficient staff nor funds to provide for really careful placement. The situation has improved and they feel that they might be able to give more time and effort to some experimentation in this area before long. We would like to know whether there is any material available pertaining to parent and child boarding programs.

EDITOR'S NOTE: From several different sections of the country we are hearing that some working mothers and some working fathers are applying for help in finding boarding homes for themselves and for their children. In the past, child placing agencies have been inclined to feel that when a parent can continue to live with his child and be responsible for the cost of his care, that parent can also find and make his own arrangements. Some agencies referred to inquirers for such homes the names and addresses of applicants to the home finding departments who had wanted a higher rate of board, that is, who were more definitely concerned with earning more money than a foster mother could through serving the agency. In other communities the local Board of Health, responsible for licensing homes and the visitation of independent foster homes, served as a source for such parents. The services of the social agencies were reserved largely for families who were economically deprived.

We would be interested in hearing how agencies confronted with this problem today are dealing with it.